

Special Education Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes

Office of Public Instruction
1300 11th Avenue Conference Room
Helena
June 22-23, 2006

Members in Attendance: WyAnn Northrop, Diana Colgrove, Gary Perleberg, Dick Slonaker, Dave Mahon, Janet Jansen, Barb Rolf, Coral Beck, Robert Maffit, Bob Peake, Terry Teichrow

Excused Members: Cody Sinnott, Ron Fuller, Norma Wadsworth, Holly Raser, Amy McCord

Non-Members in Attendance: Bob Runkel, Marilyn Pearson, Dolores Slovarp, Tim Kelly, Doug Doty, Dick Trerise, Denise Juneau, Mike Jetty, Susan Bailey-Anderson, Marlene Wallis

Thursday, June 22, 2006

Chairperson WyAnn Northrop called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Panel members and guests introduced themselves. Chairperson Northrop requested that the Panel members review the Proposed Agenda. Following review of the Proposed Agenda, Gary Perleberg moved to accept the Proposed Agenda, Bob Maffit seconded the motion and the motion passed. The minutes of the February 9-10, 2006, meeting were reviewed and Janet Jansen moved to accept the minutes and Bob Peake seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were approved as written.

Janet Jansen told the Panel that she had sent a card to Dennis Moore from the Panel. She said that Dennis is still on the ventilator, and has some head and shoulder movement. Plans are to move Dennis to Colorado for treatment.

OPI Report

Student Information System Update

Bob Runkel informed the Panel that the Infinite Campus company will begin working on the Student Information System. When fully operational, the system will improve the quality of data and reduce the time teachers spend in reporting data. The first step is to assign students a unique identifier. Training will be provided for the use of the system and this will be intensive training available on a regional basis. For special education staff, the training will be available for all special education teachers, related service providers and administrators. The special education forms will have quality assurance procedures so that the form cannot be finalized until the form is correctly filled out. Bob reminded the returning Panel members that they will hear concerns regarding the system and need to remind those with concerns that this is the first year of using the system. The system will provide data that is clean and accurate.

Hopefully, the system will be up and collecting information for individual student identifiers as early as September. In April, the special education component will, hopefully, be operational. Schools should be able to ease into the system and all schools will be required to use the special education system by December 1, 2007.

E-Grants System Update

Marilyn Pearson reported that the E-Grants System is still in the design stage. There are many challenges to address in designing the system since it has to address all of the documentation requirements under each of the federal programs while at the same time have consistency in the manner in which it is formatted. The system will include an improvement planning tool which each district will be required to complete and then revise, as appropriate, on an annual basis. Extensive training will be provided for in-house staff, as well as for school personnel who will be using the E-Grant system. The OPI staff have worked cross-divisionally with the vendor in design of the system to help ensure it addresses all program requirements while at the same time being user friendly.

State Performance Plan Update

Marilyn Pearson reported that the OPI is contracting with Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC) for the data collection, analysis and reporting of results of the Parent Involvement (Performance Indicator #8). The survey will be disseminated in fall of 2006 to school districts which will be monitored in the 2006-2007 school year. Doug Doty, from OPI, is taking the 'lead' on this performance indicator. He is working with MPRRC and implementing procedures to disseminate the surveys and help ensure Montana has a good response rate. All parents of students with disabilities in the districts to be monitored in each year of the monitoring cycle will be surveyed. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has endorsed Montana's survey plan.

IDEA Update

Bob Runkel said that it is possible that OSEP will be issuing final federal regulations for IDEA in late August. The OSEP Leadership Conference is scheduled for August 28-30, 2006, and the regulations will probably be discussed at this meeting. Bob noted that there will be a national IEP form provided to states at the time the regulations are released. The national IEP form may influence the content of the IEP to be used in the electronic student information system.

Standards for Braille Instructors

Marilyn Pearson participated in the 'Standards for Braille Instructors' work group established by the Board of Education. The purpose of the group is to propose to the Board of Public Education a set of standards for Montana accredited schools to follow when employing individuals who will provide Braille instruction to students. She reported there is a shortage of personnel to provide instruction in Braille. The work group is sensitive to the personnel shortage while at the same time wanting to ensure the quality of Braille instruction for students. Bob Maffit noted that there is a National Literacy test for Braille instructors. Bob Runkel requested that Bob Maffit e-mail him regarding where it is located.

Special Education Personnel Update

Bob Runkel announced that Dick Trerise was selected as the Unit Manager for the School Improvement Unit of the Division of Special Education. This is a new position in the division. Dick's responsibilities include oversight and administration of special education school

improvement activities of the division, including compliance monitoring and focused intervention.

Tara Ferriter-Smith joins the Division of Special Education as a specialist. Tara will be located in the Professional Development Unit. Tara was a teacher at the Canyon Creek School.

Paperwork Reduction Update

Bob Runkel informed the Panel that the Paperwork Reduction committee has met five times. The committee's goal is to come up with streamlined approaches for reducing paperwork. The committee also wants to determine how they can make the IEP procedure more parent friendly. Presently, parents sometimes walk into meetings without any background information on the material to be discussed, i.e., test results. The committee is considering making it a practice to meet with the parent(s) in person or by telephone to discuss what their priorities are as a first step in the development of the IEP. An initial draft of the IEP could be prepared that the parents could review prior to the meeting. If the parent is satisfied with the draft the IEP could be signed; if not, it could be modified. The procedure could mean more work up front, but would be a more natural approach for the parent(s) and could save time spent in meetings.

Capital High "We Teach All" Pilot Project

Dolores Slovarp and Tim Kelly made a presentation regarding the Capital High School "We Teach All" Pilot Project STRIDE. This project was developed to meet the needs of all learners in the general curriculum, aligning activities and practices to state standards. The first goal of the project is "Team Preparation and Training for Academies." The objectives of the goal are to 1) continue usage of Differentiated Instruction and/or co-teaching by offering presentations, workshops and training; 2) increase the knowledge of team members through on-site, state or national conferences, workshops, presentations and trainings; 3) revise/expand the resource guide(s) and other materials. People see the resource guides as a treasure chest; 4) revise and develop Differentiated Instruction and/or Co-Teaching presentations and academies to meet different needs of educators.

The second goal of the project is "Outreach/Networking." The objectives of the goal are: 1) presentation opportunities on local and state levels; 2) collect print and electronic resources and assist the Web master for Internet Site; 3) expand resources to provide lessons and units on CD and/or print; 4) create video of Capital High School teachers utilizing Differentiated Instruction and Co-Teaching; 5) educators visit Capital High School to observe Differentiated Instruction/Co-Teaching modeling and debriefing with team members; 6) video conferencing—live video streaming for those who cannot come to Helena; 7) increase number of current Differentiated Instruction and Co-Teaching practitioners at Capital High School; 8) increase the number of Differentiated Instruction and Co-Teaching practitioners throughout the state.

Compliance Monitoring 2005-2006

Doug Doty, OPI Monitoring Specialist, discussed the preliminary results of the 2005-2006 compliance monitorings. Eighty districts were monitored this school year and 51 of the reports have been sent (schools were monitored through mid-May). The average time from the on-site compliance monitoring visit to the mailing of the monitoring report to the district is 29 days.

A total of 90 corrective actions were received by 34 of the 51 districts. A corrective action (CAP) is given when a district is out of compliance with special education rules/regulations and requires the district to correct the non-compliance and demonstrate that they are in compliance. This is not an unusual number of CAPS. The most common CAPS were:

In the IEP, the failure to include or address 1. how/when the student's progress toward the annual goals will be reported; 2. measurable post-secondary goals; 3. measurable annual goals which are actually measurable. (Items 2 is a new requirement under IDEA 2004. Item 3 has increased emphasis due to changes in IDEA 2004.)

In the referral process, the failure to include general education interventions.

In the Child Study Team process, the failure to include current classroom-based assessments and implications for assessments.

In previous years the common CAPs were for:

Not including accommodations or modifications for students.

Not including how/when the student's progress toward measurable annual goals will be reported.

The same CST issues.

Twenty-two districts received confidential memoranda (CM). A confidential memorandum identifies student-specific non-compliance and requires the district to correct the non-compliance, typically by convening a Child Study Team or IEP meeting.

Fourteen CMs were for failure to include measurable post-secondary goals in the IEP for students aged 16 and older. This is a new requirement under IDEA.

Fourteen CMs required the district to reconduct a CST which had insufficient assessments to determine eligibility.

It is difficult to compare "common" CAPs across years because IDEA rule changes mean that different rules/procedures come into effect. The 2005-2006 concern with measurable post-secondary goals was not in rule prior to this school year.

Future issues in which OPI will need to conduct training include:

The review of existing evaluation data - it is likely that the documentation process will change for 2006-2007.

Measurable Annual Goals - This is a high priority. Changes to IDEA have increased the importance of this item. Many teachers do not know how to write these.

Pre-training in the special education process will be done in the fall with the school districts to be monitored in the 2006 and 2007 school years. The OPI staff will be presenting similar trainings at conferences and CSPD Institutes.

Speech-Language Pathology Stipend Program

Marilyn Pearson informed the Panel members that Montana continues to have a shortage of speech/language pathologists.

The OPI offers traineeships for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology or in another field to complete the necessary requirements for licensure as a speech-language pathologist in Montana. Most of the Montana traineeships are for support of individuals participating in distance education at the University of Wyoming (Laramie) and the University of Northern Colorado (Greeley).

Response to Intervention (RtI) Project

Dick Trerise conducted a Power Point presentation regarding Response to Intervention (RtI) and the RtI pilot project the State Personnel Development Grant is funding through the University of Montana School of Psychology. Under the IDEA Reauthorization, there is a new system of accountability, including new policies and procedures. The reauthorization allows for the "response-to-intervention" method of LD identification as an alternative to the ability-achievement discrepancy approach to identification.

Current identification practices for "LD" utilize a discrepancy model that sometimes misidentifies students; occasionally results in disproportionate minority representation in special education; functions like a "wait to fail" process; focuses on the "problem," not the solution; and fails to serve all students with significant needs.

After more than 30 years in practice and research, it is known that this approach often does not lead to useful educational prescriptions for the remediation of the student's academic difficulties.

Dick said that RtI is an educational process with the goal for positive outcomes for all children. The mission of RtI is to provide proactive prevention and intervention activities; a continuum of instructional supports, all educators responsible for all children; and to engage students and families in the educational process.

The pilot schools involved in the project are:

Gardiner Elementary, Gardiner
Jefferson Elementary, Glendive
K. William Harvey Elementary, Ronan
Roosevelt Elementary, Great Falls

Early Assistance Program

Tim Harris will present this program at a later Parent Advisory Panel meeting.

Expressions of Silence

Janet Jansen showed a DVD of the Montana group "Expressions of Silence." The choir group is from the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind and most of the students communicate in sign language because they are deaf or hard of hearing; one is visually impaired. The choir presents

concerts around the state. The 26-member choir was invited to perform with the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir and with the country music stars the "Oakridge Boys." The choir traveled by bus to Salt Lake City for the performance.

Recognition of Retiring Members

The retiring members that were recognized are:

Gary Perleberg—Parent of a Child with Disabilities
Norma Wadsworth—Higher Education
WyAnn Northrop—Teacher of Children with Disabilities
Robert Maffit—Business Concerned with Transitions
Holly Raser—Legislator
Cody Sinnott—Student

The members were presented with plaques that thanked them for their years of dedicated service to the Panel.

The Panel adjourned for the day and will meet again in the morning.

Friday, June 23, 2006

Chairperson WyAnn Northrop opened the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

Indian Education for All

Denise Juneau, Director, Indian Education, told the Panel that the Indian Education Division staff consists of Lynn Hinch, Bilingual Education/Indian Ed Administrator; Mike Jetty, Indian Education Specialist-Curriculum; Mandy Smoker Broaddus, Indian Education Achievement Specialist; Angela Collins, Indian Education Implementation Specialist; Cal Boyle, GEAR UP Program Specialist; Amy Sings in the Timber, Dropout Prevention Program Specialist; and Joan Franke, Administrative Assistant.

Denise said in 1972 language was added to the Montana Constitution Article X, Section 1(2):

"The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity."

To codify the state constitution, in 1999 the Legislature passed House Bill 528 into law—MCA 20-1-501—what has become known as Indian Education for All. Denise said that Montana's accreditation standards provide guidelines for the implementation of Indian Education for All.

Denise said that resources, sample lessons and helpful publications are available on the OPI Indian Education Web site at www.opi.mt.gov/IndianEd. The OPI works with educators from across the state to develop teacher-friendly model lessons to help schools implement Indian Education for All.

The legislature appropriated funds in 2005 to the OPI and to local school districts for the development of Indian Education for All model curriculums, classroom materials, professional development. The OPI received funding to provide Ready To Go Grants to schools for local

projects regarding curriculum development or professional development models that are replicable for other districts. Tribal colleges were appropriated funds to develop tribal histories.

Mike Jetty informed the Panel that he evaluates and recommends textbooks and curriculum.

Parent Involvement Requirements Under NCLB

Terry Teichrow discussed the parent involvement requirements under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB). He noted that a district may receive Title I funds only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures that involve parents in meaningful consultation for planning and implementation. The districts shall develop a written policy jointly with, agreed on with, and distributed to parents of participating children. When writing the plan and revising it, the parents know things about the child that the teacher does not that could be incorporated into the plan.

The district shall set aside 1 percent of the agency allocation for parent involvement if allocation is above \$500,000. Parents will be involved in the decisions regarding expenditure for parent involvement activities. Each school shall develop with the parents a school-parents compact that outlines how parents, the entire staff and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help students achieve the state's high academic standards. It is similar to an IEP. Terry said that probably the most important portion of the checklist is to address the importance of communication between the teachers and parents through at least an annual parent-teacher conference in elementary schools, frequent reports to the parents on their children's progress and reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and observe classroom activities.

Personnel Prep Grant and CSPD

Susan Bailey-Anderson said that the new law does not mention Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), but it does mention Personnel Development. Montana's CSPD consists of one state and five regional councils. These groups are always in tune to rule changes. The Montana CSPD is a unified personnel development system that ensures quality educational programs and services for all children and youth.

The goals of the Montana CSPD are enhancing state policy/systems work toward statewide professional development consortium; evaluations and dissemination of findings; address personnel shortages; build preservice system capacity; provide inservice opportunities; and expand existing CSPD potential. The Ad Hoc committees include: Paraprofessional Consortium; Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI); Higher Education Consortium; Recruitment and Retention Task Force; Related Service Partnership; Mentoring Task Force and Assistive Technology.

Advisory Panel Elections

The Vice-Chairperson and Secretary positions were up for nomination.

Gary Perleberg nominated Barb Rolf for Vice-Chairperson, Janet Jansen seconded the motion, and Barb Rolf was elected by acclamation.

Dick Slonaker moved to retain Janet Jansen as the Secretary, Bob Peake seconded the motion, and Janet Jansen was retained as Secretary by acclamation.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Marilyn Pearson noted that the OSEP review will take place September 12, 13 and 14. She requested that the first Panel meeting for 2006-2007 be held possibly on September 14-15, 2006.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting (Tentative Agenda)

Larry Wexler
National IEP
CRT Update
Assessment
SIS System (if update is available)
Braille Standards Committee
Montana HOPE
IDEA Regulations
OSEP Leadership Conference Report

Adjourn

Bob Peak moved to adjourn the meeting, Dick Slonaker seconded the motion and the motion passed. The Panel meeting adjourned at Noon on June 23, 2006.